177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods of education. He also went across to the American Mission School where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in this way he met my mother.

873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to Intermediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grand-
582 mother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married. But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myookship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwegyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me.* My mother, who has never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in change, and wired back *Yes.*

584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

old man with rhetorical leanings and included things because they formed a nice rhyme, and, indeed, she was not far from the truth. Our monosyllabic language is a heavenly gift to us with its endless scope for the most unrestrained punning and rhyming; the pun in Burmese is not execrable humour but a stepping stone for flights of fancy. What my sister was not allowed to eat were the three most precious foods as proverbalised in: *a-thi-hma tha-yet; a-gwet hma la-hpet; a-tha hma wet:* among fruits the *tha-yet*, among leaves the *la-hpet*, among flesh the *wet: tha-yet, la-hpet* and *wet* being the mango, the pickled tea-leaf and the pig's flesh respectively, and open to question as being really the prize specimens of their class, but certainly rhyming happily.

My parents were so good to us; they never scolded, beat or punished us that I can remember. Perhaps they had both had so much discipline in their own youths; I can remember the day we were told to answer them "Father" and "Mother" when they called us, instead of *Paya* as we had done formerly. Paya is the term of extreme respect and humility, sometimes adopted by children to parents, always by servants to their superiors, by subordinates to senior officials, and by all to royalty and the clergy. It is also the suffix to honorific titles. Its true and ancient use had associations of reverence only, but it has taken on a more subservient hue with the advent of government and foreign officials.

But whether we answered Paya or Father, my mother's guiding influence led us to look on my father with awe, even though he was the parent who clowned with us at home. We were always bathed and dressed before he came home, waiting for him. As soon as he entered the gate we raced down the drive to carry his umbrella, took him upstairs and scrambled to take his shoes off as soon as we could get him seated. His shoes, suspenders and socks were removed by combined efforts, my father pretending great helplessness all the while. We went for walks while my parents went to play tennis, but retuned in time to carry their racquets upstairs and remove my father's shoes again. After dinner my mother and we lay on mats while my father sat in an easy chair and pretended to get his nursery rhymes all wrong, until we taught him:

A-hpo gyi oh, hka kon kon, — Old man so bent and grey,
Ma thay ba hnin ohn — Do not die as yet we pray.
Naung hnit-kha ta-saung-mon — Till next December try to tarry
Pwè kyi ba ohn. — And watch the actors play and marry.

Or the voracious cat who ate everything:

Kyaung-gyi gè tè mi tan to — Oh you big and short tailed cat.
A-hsi ko sa ba lo — Swallowing the lean
A-tha ko myo. — And eating the fat.

593 857 539 Or of far-off Meiktila Lake where the water stretches seven miles ong:

Meiktila kan-daw auk ka	From the waters of Meiktila Lake
Hpa kauk hkè ba	Pick up a frog for me.
Hpa pa yin ta gaung pay ba	Poor little frog,
Myet lon ga kyaung taung taung hnin,	Eyes big agog,
Hpa gaung ga thay.	And body so thin and wee.

Or the jumping nonsensical rhyme about Gyat-Aye who got beaten by her mother and wept in a dark corner and started a train of kaleidoscopic events, for every time a line ended with a clanging rhythm it suggested a rhyming word to shout out and continue its own associations, and when you got back to a rhyme for Gyat-Aye, you had to start all over again, and poor Gyat-Aye got beaten and cried as long as children's voices held out.

Gyat-Aye	Gyat-Aye
Thu amay yaik lo	Beat by her mother so,
Hmaung maik hma ngo	Cries in dark corner "Oh",
Ko Lu Byo	Young bachelor Ko
Hta-yan pauk ka	Through hole in the mantel
Chay-dauk ko swè,	Pulls at her ankle
Twè-lè !	Dangle !
Twè-le yè	Dangling yet wait awhile,
Nay ba ohn	The rain clouds pile,
Mo tway ka chon	The heavens clang,
Mok lon !	Meringue !
Mok lon yè sekku kat pa lo	Meringue with paper stuck below
Kya ka-lat hnin hsun-daw tin	Offer at altar in lacquer bowl,
Pa-lin paw ka myauk kalay,	From throne seat the monkey gay
Hsin chi lo pyay	Runs down and off with it away !
Gyat-Aye !	Gyat-Aye !

593- 782 Before going to bed, A-Kyi or Ngwe Yin took us in to say our prayers in chorus. We then *shikkoed* our parents, that is, made obeisance to them by folding hands and bowing till our foreheads and outstretched palms touched the ground, first to my father, then to my mother, and they said in turn each night: *"Pongyi-ba-say, thetshay-ba-say meba hnin-o-aung-min-aung paung-ya-ba-say :* May your holiness be great and your life long, may you be united with your parents even until the attainment of old age."

(35)

CHAPTER SIX

THE social life which my parents led with other families in the district towns was shared by us and all the other children. Burmese children do not live in a child's world cut off from reality—there is no specially created world for them like that of J. M. Barrie—they are given enough food for their wildest imagination, but this feeds equally the grandmother and nurses who tell them stories. No special children's parties with cakes and games for them are provided; they go everywhere with the grown-ups, on visits, excursions and festivals, they eat and sleep in the same rooms as the elders and hear most of the conversation. One result is to make Burmese children more conscious of family ties and responsibilities, and to prepare them better for any calamities that may befall them in adolescence or any time before they are fully grown up. Yet no one who sees Burmese children can doubt that delight, wonder and pure joy are present in their lives.

All Burmese social gatherings centre round either religious observances or eating. We are still unsophisticated enough to have the same way of enjoying ourselves whether in city or country, and for that reason these district towns formed such a perfect background for happy days. In the towns that I remember, a river ran through, with sandbanks at edges or in midstream; this, with the monasteries and pagoda precincts a little way out of the busy quarters, private garden orchards and the houses of friends, provided the background for all the social life which my parents had, and is the reason why Burmese people never form social clubs. Most of the officials went to play tennis at the Gymkhana club with European members, but it had no real part in their lives.

When we went on *pyaw-pwè-sas*, happy-eating-gatherings, at pagodas, with two or three other families, the grown-ups, including aunts and dependents of the families, made elaborate food arrangements because the joy of the occasion was to cook on a large-scale in the open air. They took pots, dishes, food and washing apparatus for about twenty people. We started with silent recitation of prayers before the golden spire in the cool morning air, holding silver lilies between folded hands and being so careful not to breathe in the fragrance of the flowers, because my mother taught us that we should not first enjoy the beauty of flowers which are to be offered. When our short prayers were through, we stuck the flowers in a vase or niche at the pagoda base, lighted a row of candles

(50)

CHAPTER EIGHT

593
528

MY mother, who had strict ideas about keeping her household a neat family unit of father, mother and children, without dependent aunts and other relatives, had equally strong views about the maintenance of our family ties and traditions, especially as we were now having a Western upbringing in the English schools and not many counteracting lessons at home. Once a year at least, she thought, we should go to have the roots of our beginnings stirred and kept alive. When the younger children were old enough to travel easily, therefore, we went away for each summer vacation.

For her own home, my mother thought a short visit would suffice; the longer visit was paid to my father's family because he could never come with us to see them. In any case, the visits to Thaton were dull for children in those growing up days, all my mother's family like herself had gone into a more worldly life and were settled in their respective professions. The main part of the great house was shut up and empty, and my mother took us there just for a few days to see my aunt, pay a visit to the hpongyi, and to inspect rubber estates which we had just outside Thaton. Then we journeyed on to Ye where my father's family were still living the life he had planned for them when he worked to buy my grandmother her plots of paddy-land.

Our visits to Ye were pure delight. In childhood any change in itself makes a holiday, and the change from our district life to the life at Ye was very great indeed.

528
489
361

A railway had been built from Moulmein to Ye in 1925; it ended at Ye where passengers travelling further crossed the creek and continued in buses for about 100 miles of mountain road to Tavoy. This was the only overland route to the Tenasserim coast below Ye. We crossed the Martaban-Moulmein ferry in the early morning, ate breakfast with friends while waiting for the connection, and arrived at Ye about 5 in the evening. Ye was by then the headquarters of a township and had a population of about 2,000. It was an extremely congested little town, for the number of its houses and inhabitants had just multiplied without any great changes in its original plan or acreage. The two main streets ran parallel to the creek, and along them the Talaing houses were packed, with only three to four feet of space between every few houses to give access from creek to road and from one road to another.

taking life. Only the hardened ones of the village, *ta-nga-thès*, drew and netted in the wealth of fish around Ye, and the theoretical condemnation in which their profession was held absolved all good Buddhists from any sin in eating the fruits of their labours. My aunts bought vast quantities of fish for salting and drying. This cured fish supplied our yearly needs as well as theirs. They also bought prawns to press into a paste called *ngapi*, in this case *seinsa* ngapi, which forms the basis of all our flavouring and condiments. As soon as the ta-nga-thè came up with his boatloads of prawns they were spread out on rough bamboo mats and sunned on the big platform behind the house. When they were fairly dried, my aunts, with a helper or two from the village, mashed up the prawns by hand, throwing in vast quantities of salt as they worked. The mess was left in the sun for a few days, being stirred every now and again. By this time it had turned into a grey-black paste, more or less smooth, smelling most pungent and rotten to foreigners but *hmway-dè*, fragrant, to us, and tasting like a concentrate of anchovy. This paste is stored in small glazed earthenware jars. It is used to flavour all meat and vegetables dishes, or is fried or pounded with other ingredients to provide condiments for the meal. The Tenasserim coast is the chief source of seinsa ngapi in Burma, the big towns of Tavoy and Mergui supplying towns in Upper Burma as well. The large amounts of salt needed come from the valuable salt fields in this area which produce about 6,000 tons annually.

It can be imagined what excitement a holiday at Ye caused us in our growing years, and even my mother's admonitions that we were to behave in accordance with strict Burmese ideas which prevailed at Ye rather than the un-Burmese habits acquired at school did not dampen our excitement. We were then at English-speaking schools where we had adopted the habit of calling each other by name. The eldest of my young sisters Mya Mya, is seven years younger than I am, but when she went to school I had only two sisters left who called me respectfully, *Ma-Ma Gyi*, elder sister, and by the time the youngest was at school there was no Ma Ma Gyi left in the family. The tradition of the younger ones fetching and carrying for the elder had also sadly deteriorated.

At meals, my mother had not kept up the custom of helping the eldest person present with a portion of every dish before it was open to the rest of the company. Before we went to Ye, therefore, my mother gathered us around her and told us how we were to behave so as to give our grandmother and aunts great pleasure in our visit and no rude shocks. "Now don't forget, *the-mi-to*, my daughters, you will all three call your sister Big-Elder-Sister; you, Pusu, are to call Mya Mya Middle-Elder-Sister, and Aye Little-Elder-Sister. In fact you should

593 177. 57 always do so, at home and everywhere else, but mother understands that you make habits easily at your English school. Never walk into the house with your slippers on, as you do in the downstairs room here. When you eat with your grandmother and aunts, don't touch anything until your aunts have put a little of it into Grandmother's plate. And try not to talk to one another in English." All the way in the train my sisters would fling themselves at me and shout, "Big Elder Sister, Big Big Elder Sister."

528 592 264 We went to Ye during our summer holidays which were the longest in the school year and allowed us three weeks with my father and a month at Ye. It also enabled us to pay obeisance to our grandmother at the New Year, and to celebrate this loveliest of festivals in its most fitting surroundings. My Uncle San Lin usually sent his wife and our four small cousins at the same time, so that for one month in the year at least Grandmother could feel that the world of big towns and English civilization had not robbed her of any family affection. Sleeping and eating arrangements for the gathering of twenty odd people were no problems for the simple large-scale economy of the household. My mother had a bed, and beside it my Aunt Khin and all the children slept on thinbyus laid side by side on the platform upper storey. Meals were eaten in successive rounds at a low table on the kitchen floor, not served as separate sittings, but by calling more diners as places were vacated, and filling each dish that diminished from the stove near-by.

529 177 Half of our visit to Ye was spent at the garden where we were surrounded by rich fruits and could bathe in the clear swift water that rushed through islands of reeds. We walked and rode in bullock carts,

for miles, to visit other gardens owned by Grandmother's friends—old men and women who lived there all the time, and who chuckled with delight to see us, for to them we were not ourselves, not ordinary

becoming common. Borrowing money is always such a shameful thing to Burmans that highly usurious rates prevail. The minimum rate of these private money-lenders is Re. 1/8 per Rs. 100/- per month, *i.e.* 18% per annum.

But this emphasis on money-making during the retirement period was not pure avariciousness. It was connected with the ability to discharge the duties of a parent and a good Buddhist during one's last years, to have sufficient means to settle children in a good marriage, which is one of the duties laid down for a good parent, and to make many donations towards pagodas, resthouses and monasteries, all as a foundation for a rebirth into a better existence.

For men like my father, this last period of their lives was a soft and gentle immersion in the atmosphere which pervaded their childhood in the monastery, and which had been banished into a memory with the years of English education, government posts, courts and litigation, and the rearing of children whose future must be bound up with the obtaining of better government posts.

During these years, my father continued his daily prayers before the altar, but they were short and he said them softly, his feet were shod with shoes and socks, his tourings took him to headmen's houses more often than to monasteries, his evenings were spent in playing tennis instead of chinlon, and drinking lime-juice instead of coconut water, and his houses of the regulation pattern were filled with cane furniture made by convicts in jails. What a far cry from the dim light on wooden floors and pillars, the steady chorus of young monks at prayers. My father, who during his working years had encouraged us to eat, laugh and be merry in each present moment, now dismayed us with a sudden conviction of the vanity of all worldly things, towns, society, dress and ornament. We woke up at dawn to the sound of his prayers, and on most mornings he walked out of the town to the hills where the monasteries and resthouses were gathered; he walked barefoot again with great enjoyment in those quiet grounds, turned aside to supervise the building of a *thein*, a house for the ordination and meditation of monks, which he had persuaded a more wealthy friend to endow. He no longer showered on us de luxe editions of Western encyclopaedias and the collected works of Dickens and Scott as he used to, but bought richly carved book cases and sacred books for the monasteries in Thaton. We no longer ate our meals on chairs, sitting up at a table, but at a low round table on the polished floor. My father sat cross legged, but he could not go back to eating with his fingers, he still used a spoon and fork. At nights we fell asleep to the sound of his prayers and it was like a benediction. Buddhist prayers in Burma consist of two parts: the first is a

887 long recitation of precepts and lauds, mostly in Pali and not intelligible
788 to the casual ear. The second part, the *hsu-taung*, is the asking for
• 593 blessings in a formula which asks: "May (my mother) be blessed.
179. May (a married couple) have long life together." My father worked
91 through a list of all his and my mother's relations and connections. Going down in order of seniority he fitted them all into a rhythm and we came to know the place of each in this melodious chant. When we were young we sometimes waited with bated breath for the turn of a relation who had just quarrelled with my parents, but my father never omitted to ask for blessings on him. We loved this part of our parents' prayers. Uncles, first and second cousins whom we did not see for long stretches

of time, were kep familiar in this way. Relationships were prefixed to each name; births, deaths and marriages were registered, the infant cousins added, the newly-dead aunts omitted, and the new niece-at-law joined in a long and happy life to her husband. We loved especially our own place in the litany—my sisters, because they were given their full and correct names by which they were never called, and I, because I was an exception, called even in this formal litany by the affectionate name my parents had for me. "*Tha Maung Sett Kaing*," my father, would chant, "*Tha Maung Sett Kaing, Tha-mi Mamie, Tha-mi Ma Mya Thin, Tha-mi Ma Hin Aye, Tha-mi Ma Myat Kyi:* Son Succeeding and Lasting, Daughter Mamie, Daughter Fragrant Emerald, Daughter Cool as the Dew, Daughter Noble and Clear."

897 Most of the pensioners lived a similar life to my father's at this time.
52 It was indicative of the contentment of their retired existence that they

never talked about the business of their past working days when they met. Sometimes they showed a fleeting interest in news of the postings of friends still in service, but even the official matters of Thaton district itself did not enter into their discussions. They talked of charity donations, of the respective monasteries which they endowed and attended, and of formulæ of *eggaya-hto*, alchemy, or the search for the philosopher's stone which will turn all metals to gold. Most Burmans get interested in eggaya-hto during their later years, even if few now practise it.

This alchemy, which has no place among the true teachings of Buddhism, has to be done under auspicious astrological influences and is usually carried on in secret. Burman Buddhists condemn the use of it when it is carried on for *lawba*, greed for riches, but others justify the process as a means of concentrating the mental faculties. The common stories tell of hermits in the forests, who by their ascetic life and concentrated meditation have more powers over the forces of nature, as being well versed in the processes of alchemy. When such a hermit achieves the extreme concentration of mind on his task he is successful—the philosopher's stone is discovered, the body of the hermit then disappears in the dissolving of matter, and his spirit is free to live unhampered by the body, till the arrival of the next Buddha on the earth. Most Burmese women, however, although they believe that this happens in the case of hermits, object very strongly to the practice of alchemy on the part of their menfolk, owing to the money and energy that is wasted on seeking out new and expensive formulæ once the craze has got hold of a man. All experiments are started with mercury which is melted with other minerals, animal or vegetable substances which derive their magical properties partly from their inaccessibility, partly from being treated with prescribed rites. My father had no intention of taking up alchemy and impoverishing us, but he too was very interested to hear of the success and failure of various methods. These discussions must have been kept well anchored to reality by the other chief topic of discussion—the families of the pensioners.

The five duties of a parent towards his children include the settling of the child in a good marriage. By the time the a-so-ya mins retire, their sons and daughters have reached a marriageable age. The sons are in the process of winning a good position in one of the government services and their daughters have been dressed with an adequate amount of jewellery. The marriage market, which had no existence in former Burmese society and which still is unheard of in Ye, and among the poorer people, is now a very concrete institution among the educated and modern classes. The rise of the minkadaw class and of higher paid Class I government officials has been mainly responsible for this. More

593 584 554 177 58 565 and more within recent years, the higher government services have come to be associated not only with "face", but with *gon*, prestige, and *ausa*, authority, which together make up a *myet-hna-gyi*, big face, in Burma. Mothers of daughters want their daughters to have gon and ausa and be big of face as the wife of the senior government officer in a town, and mothers of sons want to get the most for themselves and their other children out of having such a golden goose. They want a girl with wealth, a meek nature, good looks, religious piety and education, more or less in this order. So that the imperfect daughter-in-law may lack the last named qualities rather than the first. Wealth means not merely money, property or jewels, but an absence of younger brothers and sisters or other potential dependents, this being a very important factor in our closely-knit family system. A relative of mine who had just seen his son enter a top service, showed my father his comprehensive table of the marriageable girls of Burma, under headings of family connections, amount and form of property, potential dependents, physical and moral qualities of the girl. My father should have been keenly interested as the father of a son who was studying in England with success, and, indeed, when my brother returned, he might have fetched us about Rs. 30,000 had he desired, so far have we progressed beyond the Burmese traditions of the man's family asking for the hand of the girl with presents of money and jewellery.

It may be asked, what of the men who are thus bartered? Burmans are very greatly attached to their mothers; few can resist a mother's tears, and the tears in these cases are genuinely of grief, because the mother sees this marriage as a faithful discharge of one of her five duties. The five duties of a child towards its parent, on the other hand, include the support of father and mother, and in making this marriage the man sees the best way of providing comfort to his parents in their old age. For the girls also, an arranged marriage is not necessarily a joyless thing. Girls who are educated as we have been, in spite of reading Western romances, are brought up to believe that a girl will grow to love her husband who is good to her. *Tha-na*, pity, compassion, and *chit*, affection-love, are very close in Burmese; the usual way for a wife to address her husband is *Maung*, the same word as younger brother, or *Ko Ko*, elder brother; some husbands address their wives as *nyi-ma-lay*, little sister. And, in fact, in most cases the results do bear out the wisdom of this attitude towards marriage; so that to most Burmans it is the "free" Western marriages which so often appear ill-assorted and lead to divorces. Still, it cannot be denied that much undignified haggling and manœuvring go on nowadays, in the efforts to obtain the best match for sons and daughters. *Aung-thwès*, go-betweens, get a lot of

face from bringing something off, money is paid in advance, rush tactics are employed to prevent the man returning from abroad from marrying the sweetheart of his college days, and in some cases even magic is resorted to, though in secret. This black magic, especially, involves some very undignified actions. A younger cousin of mine once warned his mother: "Please, Mother, never try to sell me like a bullock, or worse still to arrange a marriage for my sister. I will not help you to jump thrice on eggshells or throw ten viss of fish into a well at dead of night under instructions from a soothsayer."

Although marriages were constantly being arranged among our circle of friends in Thaton, I was not allowed to attend weddings as a young unmarried girl. What we did attend regularly with the grown-ups were the *u-bok-nay*, the duty day gatherings every week in the resthouses among the hills. On these days Buddhists who choose to observe the day, obey eight or ten precepts instead of five. Amongst these ten are the abstaining from food after mid-day, absence of ornament and cosmetics in dress, meditation and prayer, and absence of a high couch in sleep. In Thaton the observance of this day was made the weekly social event with the same combination of material enjoyment and religious piety that characterizes all Burmese functions as described previously. Each family went to the hills early in the morning with mats, betel boxes and a well-cooked meal. The girls wore all the jewellery they had because we had not yet taken the precepts, and this was a good chance of showing that a family did not lack wealth. We met in the resthouses, to one of which a monk came to intone the precepts. These we repeated in chorus after him; then the elders talked and chewed betel, and at about 10-30 the whole party went to bathe in the pools made by the waterfalls down the hills. We went back to find the pooled dishes of four or five families laid out in a rich feast. We stuffed ourselves with this. The law states that food should not be eaten after noon, and the law was always obeyed in the letter if not in the spirit.

One maiden lady in Rangoon who kept duty days regularly ate till as near noon as she possibly could. She usually finished her meal with fruit, and if she was eating a banana when noon struck with a loud bang from the cannon at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, "Hawl" she would exclaim, and in would go the whole length of the banana into her mouth. After noon, tea and coffee are not allowed either but aerated waters, which look so much like water, are sanctioned. When my husband was a novice monk in the monastery, they were allowed medicinal products also after noon, and the hungry young novices often made a delicious soup of garlic (a digestive) fried in butter (medicinal component), and water poured on to the fragrant compound.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

582 643 Dammathat. The sovereign always married at least one half-sister to ensure the purity of the royal blood, but, rather illogically, the issue of this union was not by any means necessarily heir to the throne. The son whom the king, or his ministers after his death, named, succeeded, or more commonly still, the son who could best maintain his position by force.

586 The liberty of divorce is practically unrestricted, except by the elaborate laws respecting the division of property. According to the Laws of Menu a woman may obtain a divorce among other reasons for the following: When her husband is poor and unable to support her; when he is always ailing; when he does not work and leads an idle life; when he is incapacitated by reason of old age; when he becomes a cripple after marriage.

And a man may obtain a divorce if his wife has no male children, if she has no love for her husband, or if she persists in going to a house where he tells her she must not visit, and so on.

The lawgiver seems in fact to have laid down that marriage is a civil contract which either party can dissolve; but, unless with good reason, the one that wishes to separate must suffer in property, more or less severely, according as the plea is good or bad.

Property, for this purpose, is said to be of three kinds. Pa-yin, property acquired by, or in possession of, persons before marriage. Let-htet-pwa, property acquired by husband or wife after marriage. Tin-thi, property inherited or obtained by gift. Pa-yin after marriage becomes hnit-pa-sôn, that is, the joint property of husband and wife, but only when it is agreed between them either before or after marriage that the property shall be put together for the mutual benefit.

In the event of a divorce both parties take away whatever pa-yin they may have had on marriage, and the let-htet-pwa is divided either by mutual agreement, or by the decision of the village elders who sanction the separation.

586 593 But divorces are far from being so common as most writers would have us believe. The warmth of family affection is one of the strongest traits of the race, and the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

586
593
562

Burman is always very kind to his wife, while every girl is taught from her earliest years to look with the highest respect upon man as man, and to defer in all things to his judgment, though she is far more free than the Indian wife. The Burman consults with his partner in all his affairs, public and private, and often is entirely guided by her. She keeps the shop that is to be found in almost every house in the country towns, and usually makes far more money than the goodman himself. It is a simple matter to blame the Burmese for easy marriage customs, but the system speedily puts an end to unhappy and ill-assorted unions, and illegitimate children are exceedingly rare. Finally, unless there is good known cause for a separation the divorced parties are not by any means looked upon with a favourable eye. The man who enters a monastery to get rid of a wife goes by the contemptuous name of taw-twet "jungle runaway," for the rest of his life, while the ta-ku-lat, the *divorcée*, is a perennial subject of joke to the jester in the play:—

586

> She that's neither maid, married, nor widow,
> Fits all men as a pot does it's lid, O.

That is to say, a divorced woman needs small wooing. Such a woman will not hesitate to cut off the bya-bazan, the lappets of hair that fall down over the ears, the last resource of the despairing and unwilling celibate.

581
828

The literature of marriage is not inconsiderable. The tattooing ceremonies, a-nu se, love-philtres, charms, and what not, are referred to elsewhere. There remain a number of singular matters to be taken note of by those who would be happy in married life. Thus the girls are told how they may ascertain a man's character by the colour of his heart's blood—though how they are to ascertain this colour without injury to the subject of inquiry is not mentioned. A lustful man's blood is dark red; a cross, quarrelsome man's is so dark as almost to be black; a lazy man's like elephant's water; a rough-speaking man's like boiled peas: a charitable man's like the flower of the mahā hlega, a species of bauhinia; while a learned man's heart's blood is beautiful as the ruby.

Similarly useless knowledge is the statement that an

Z:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

545 Zawtagômma melodrama, which the old sayā at Pegu has just brought out, and which is having a tremendous run all through the low country. The song is about the Saddan mere, the lake of the Lord White Elephant, where golden lotuses flower perpetually, where the gorgeous yin-dwin bird sails on the silvery waters, great butterflies flap about with painted wings and sip the nectar of the fabled jasmine, and peacocks stalk proudly on the jewelled margin, while around
522 roam elephants white, red, and black in happy security. The singer has hardly finished when the lu-byet, the village jester, breaks in with a travesty of the whole thing, mocking at the tremolos and the lofty style, and taking off the peculiarities of the singer. He went out to a lake too, and launched a canoe on it, but he was capsized by a huge creature that came up from below; and then he found that he had got into a slimy buffalo wallow, out of which he only escaped after great peril from the horns of its three outraged owners, who butted him under the surface many times; and at last, when he crawled out, he was so brown and dirty that some passers-by took him for a hermit, and gave him some rotten
522 plantains in alms. Before the "prince" has time to show
593 any bad temper, a girl commences a coquettish ditty, somewhat after the fashion of the English "Paddle my own canoe," about a poor wife whose husband comes home and storms and growls and abuses because there is no rice ready cooked, softens down when he has crammed himself with curry and rice, but breaks out into grumbling again at night because his wife cries and will not go to sleep. Such tyranny the young lady declares she will never expose herself to, or
533 at any rate "she'll be no submissive wife." Then there are a
832 few love-songs, wherein the girls are compared with the maids of the palace in Mandalay, and the Mandalay girls generally (who are *ex officio* pretty) with the daughters of nats, with Madi, the model wife of Wethandaya (the prince who in his next existence became the Lord Buddha), with flowers and stars and gems, and whatever similes lovers all the world over are in the habit of making. The swaying of the body as they walk, the turning in of the elbows, the fragrant powder on their cheeks and necks, and a few other items which would not commend themselves to a Western admirer,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

539

O that curve in the round arm!
It has wrought men grievous harm.
Like the sylphs when they're at play,
Like the maids of Mandalay,
Without display
In everyday
Quiet dresses they
Are busked and gay
As the daughters of the palace, as the maidens of the skies
In their natural, their usual array.

O! could I but sing what I think,
My heart would no more on the brink
Of despairing love struggle and sink,
Ye maidens to heavens the link;
Each passer-by
Who casts his eye
Upon the buxom Hanthawaddy girls,
Though he be sage,
His feelings wage
Fierce war within his brain-pan till it whirls.

Dewa daughters, fair, fair,
Rosebud fairies, ware, ware,
Born men's hearts to snare, snare,
Can I paint your ways,
Better sound your praise,
In verse
That's terse
Than thus: You're fair as any maid in Mandalay.

Barani is a daughter of nats, corresponding very much to the classical Flora. [832]

Madi, the spouse of Prince Wethandaya, is always regarded as the model wife. [593]●

Amè! "mother!" is the invariable exclamation of all Burmans on all possible occasions of astonishment, anger, doubt, or delight. [201]

The name Hanthawaddy, properly applied to the whole province, is, in songs, usually employed to designate Rangoon, for rhythmical more than any other reason, just as Mamye, or Mye, or Man stands for Mandalay. [195]

"Rosebud fairies," called bôngyo, are daughters of nats, who having stayed in the country of the dêwas for a thousand years, are obliged to come down to the seat of man again. 539 773

591 matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of
101 orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to
582 time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and rule domination in the family.

562 Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

●593 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

837 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children.

593 Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats -- a younger sibling should never sleep with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunken-
[581] ness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances.

Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

thinking, being the mother of a son is itself considered the greatest event of a woman's life and represents the achievement of full existence as a female human being. The relationship is close and indulgent. The mother is regarded by her son as more important than his wife; in fact, a son normally will choose a wife with a great deal of regard for his mother's opinions and wishes. 513

Mother and Daughter. The mother is her daughter's early teacher. It is considered most important for the girl to learn prayers, how to prepare the daily food offering, and how to change the flowers on the household altar. These things are taught almost from the time the child begins to speak and understand. Other household duties in which a mother instructs her daughter vary considerably with the economic status of the family. In poor families some assistance with tending animals and winnowing the rice is part of the girl's work from about the age of ten. Daughters are expected to show filial respect and deference equally to the mother and father. 593 868 [565]

Father and Son. The father occupies the role of disciplinarian in the family. Disciplining of sons may include physical punishment, though such measures are not resorted to readily. Prior to adolescence, boys are taught prayers and good habits by their mothers, with the father remaining more or less in the background and interfering only when disciplinary action may be required of him. After a son passes adolescence the father becomes important as his mentor. 593 861

Husband and Wife's Elder Sister. This relationship tends to mirror a conflict between age and sex as status factors in the social structure. There is an implicit conflict between the husband's position as a man and his wife's elder sister's position, in many cases, as his senior, having a claim on outward respect and obedience. In practice this relationship is often cool and aloof in nature, very much in contrast to the free and easy one between a man and his wife's younger sisters. 607 182 602

Husband and Wife's Younger Sister. A man is expected to show great favor to his wife's younger sisters and to display more interest in them than in his own sisters. He buys them presents, gives them spending money when he can, and covertly he is expected to be on the lookout for prospective husbands for them. Quite frequently, the wife's younger sisters will accompany her and her husband when she marries, and all will live together in the same house. Although husband and wife's younger sisters engage in a great deal of mutual joking and teasing, the relationship does not normally assume a sexual aspect. Polygyny is permissable but very rarely practiced; when it is, however, it takes the sororal form. The rather free and easy relationship between a husband and his wife's younger sisters sometimes gives rise to village gossip -- especially when it is known that he and his wife are not getting along well -- that he is carrying on love affairs with his younger sisters-in-law. 607 587

In-Laws. A daughter-in-law is definitely subordinate to her mother-in-law. If they live in the same household, the mother-in-law is entitled to the best room and to be waited upon by her daughter-in-law. Significantly, the Burmese word for daughter-in-law (cwēmā) means 'sweat women. 606

The term for son-in-law (Ōame?) means 'desired son.' A son-in-law is a privileged member of his wife's family. His wishes are respected and his comforts looked after. His mother-in-law instructs her younger children to show him respect and deference.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

marriage, which is with most people a ceremony performed in full daylight with all accessories of display, is with the Burmese generally a secret. Two or three friends, perhaps, will be called quietly to the house, and the man and the woman will eat together, and thus become husband and wife. Then they will separate again, and not for several days, or even weeks perhaps, will it be known that they are married; for it is seldom that they can set up house for themselves just at once. Often they will marry and live apart for a time with their parents. Sometimes they will go and live together with the man's parents, but more usually with the girl's mother. Then after a time, when they have by their exertions made a little money, they build a house and go to live there; but sometimes they will live on with the girl's parents for years.

A girl does not change her name when she marries, nor does she wear any sign of marriage, such as a ring. Her name is always the same, and there is nothing to a stranger to denote whether she be married or not, or whose wife she is; and she keeps her property as her own. Marriage does not confer upon the husband any power over his wife's property, either what she brings with her, what she earns, or what she inherits subsequently; it all remains her own, as does his remain his own. But usually property acquired after marriage is held jointly. You will inquire, for instance, who is the owner of this garden, and be told Maung Han, Ma Shwè, the former being the husband's name and the latter the wife's. Both names are used very frequently in business and in legal proceedings, and indeed it is

16 Fielding Hall G-8 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

593 562 421

usual for both husband and wife to sign all deeds they may have occasion to execute. Nothing more free than a woman's position in the marriage state can be imagined. By law she is absolutely the mistress of her own property and her own self; and if it usually happens that the husband is the head of the house, that is because his nature gives him that position, not any law.

With us marriage means to a girl an utter breaking of her old ties, the beginning of a new life, of new duties, of new responsibilities. She goes out into a new and unknown world, full of strange facts, leaving one dependence for another, the shelter of a father for the shelter of a husband. She has even lost her own name, and becomes known but as the mistress of her husband; her soul is merged in his. But in Burma it is not so at all. She is still herself, still mistress of herself, an equal partner for life.

593 885 671

I have said that the Burmese have no ideals, and this is true; but in the Laws of Manu there are laid down some of the requisite qualities for a perfect wife. There are seven kinds of wife, say the Laws of Manu: a wife like a thief, like an enemy, like a master, like a friend, like a sister, like a mother, like a slave. The last four of these are good, but the last is the best, and these are some of her qualities:

'She should fan and soothe her master to sleep, and sit by him near the bed on which he lies. She will fear and watch lest anything should disturb him. Every noise will be a terror to her; the hum of a mosquito as the blast of a trumpet; the fall of a leaf without will sound as loud as thunder. Even she

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

ill guard her breath as it passes her lips to and o, lest she awaken him whom she fears.

'And she will remember that when he awakens e will have certain wants. She will be anxious hat the bath be to his custom, that his clothes are s he wishes, that his food is tasteful to him. Always he will have before her the fear of his anger.'

It must be remembered that the Laws of Manu re of Indian origin, and are not totally accepted by he Burmese. I fear a Burmese girl would laugh at his ideal of a wife. She would say that if a wife were always afraid of her husband's wrath, she and he, too, must be poor things. A household is ruled by love and reverence, not by fear. A girl has no idea when she marries that she is going to be her husband's slave, but a free woman, yielding to him in those things in which he has most strength, and taking her own way in those things that pertain to a woman. She has a very keen idea of what things she can do best, and what things she should leave to her husband. Long experience has taught her that there are many things she should not interfere with; and she knows it is experience that has proved it, and not any command. She knows that the reason women are not supposed to interfere in public affairs is because their minds and bodies are not fitted for them. Therefore she accepts this, in the same way as she accepts physical inferiority, as a fact against which it is useless and silly to declaim, knowing that it is not men who keep her out, but her own unfitness. Moreover, she knows that it is made good to her in other ways, and thus the balance is redressed. You see, she knows her own strength and her own weak-

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

513
885
562
562
593
432
621

ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for anyone than this?

In many ways she will act for her husband with vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appearing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance, or in transacting certain kinds of business. She knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

175
726
668

In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four thousand square miles of territory which had been

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

She spoke so fast, so fast; the words fell over each other as they came from her lips, for her heart was very full.

I sat quite still and said nothing; I think she hardly noticed I was there. It was all about her husband. Everything was wrong; all had gone crooked in their lives, and she did not know what she could do. At first she could hardly tell what it was all about, but at last she explained. For some years, three or four years, matters had not been very smooth between them. They had quarrelled often, she said, about this thing and the other, little things mostly; and gradually the rift had widened till it became very broad indeed.

'Perhaps,' she said, 'if I had been able to have a child it would have been different.' But fate was unkind and no baby came, and her husband became more and more angry with her. 'And yet I did all for the best, thakin; I always tried to act for the best. My husband has sisters at Henzada, and they write to him now and then, and say, "Send ten rupees," or "send five rupees," or even twenty rupees. And I always say, "Send, send." Other wives would say, "No, we cannot afford it"; but I said always, "Send, send." I have always done for the best, always for the best.'

It was very pitiable to hear her opening her whole heart, such a sore troubled heart, like this. Her words were full of pathos; her uncomely face was not beautified by the sorrow in it. And at last her husband took a second wife.

'She is a girl from a village near; the thakin knows, Taungywa. He did not tell me, but I soon

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

heard of it; and although I thought my heart would break, I did not say anything. I told my husband, "Bring her here, let us live all together; it will be best so." I always did for the best, thakin. So he brought her, and she came to live with us a week ago. Ah, thakin, I did not know! She tramples on me. My head is under her feet. My husband does not care for me, only for her. And to-day, this evening, they went out together for a walk, and my husband took with him the concertina. As they went I could hear him play upon it, and they walked down through the trees, he playing and she leaning upon him. I heard the music.'

Then she began to cry bitterly, sobbing as if her heart would break. And the sunset died out of the sky, and the shadows took all the world and made it gray and dark. No one said anything, only the woman cried.

'Thakin,' she said at last, 'what am I to do? Tell me.'

Then my friend spoke.

'You can divorce him,' he said; 'you can go to the elders and get a divorce. Won't that be best?'

'But, thakin, you do not know. We are both Christians; we are married for ever. We were both at the mission-school in Rangoon, and we were married there, "for ever and for ever," so the padre said. We are not married according to Burmese customs, but according to your religion; we are husband and wife for ever.'

My friend said nothing. It seemed to him useless to speak to her of the High Court, five hundred

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

was the chain that bound them together. Had it not been for that they would have been divorced long ago; for they had never agreed very well, and both sides had bitter grounds for complaint. They would have been divorced, and both could have gone their own way. But now, what was to be done?

That is one of my memories: this is another.

There was a girl I knew, the daughter of a man who had made some money by trading, and when the father died the property was divided according to law between the girl and her brother. She was a little heiress in her way, owning a garden, where grew many fruit-trees, and a piece of rice land. She had also a share in a little shop which she managed, and she had many gold bracelets and fine diamond earrings. She was much wooed by the young men about there, and at last she married. He was a young man, good-looking, a sergeant of police, and for a time they were very happy. And then trouble came. The husband took to bad ways. The knowledge that he could get money for nothing was too much for him. He drank and he wasted her money, and he neglected his work, and at last he was dismissed from government employ. And his wife got angry with him, and complained of him to the neighbours; and made him worse, though she was at heart a good girl. Quickly he went from bad to worse, until in a very short time, six months, I think, he had spent half her little fortune. Then she began to limit supplies—the husband did no work at all—and in consequence he began to neglect her; they had many quarrels, and her tongue was sharp, and matters got worse and worse until they

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

586 593 [626] were the talk of the village. All attempts of the headman and elders to restrain him were useless. He became quarrelsome, and went on from one thing to another, until at last he was suspected of being concerned in a crime. So then when all means had failed to restore her husband to her, when they had drifted far apart and there was nothing before them but trouble, she went to the elders of the village and demanded a divorce. And the elders granted it to her. Her husband objected; he did not want to be divorced. He claimed this, and he claimed that, but it was all of no use. So the tie that had united them was dissolved, as the love had been dissolved long before, and they parted. The man went away to Lower Burma. They tell me he has become a cultivator and has reformed, and is doing well; and the girl is ready to marry again. Half her property is gone, but half remains, and she has still her little business. I think they will both do well. But if they had been chained together, what then?

586 428 You see that divorce is free. Anyone can obtain it by appearing before the elders of the village and demanding it. A writing of divorcement is made out, and the parties are free. Each retains his or her own property, and that earned during marriage is divided; only that the party claiming the divorce has to leave the house to the other—that is the only penalty, and it is not always enforced, unless the house be joint property.

586 789 As religion has nothing to do with marriage, neither has it with divorce. Marriage is a status, a partnership, nothing more. But it is all that.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Divorce is a dissolution of that partnership. A Burman would not ask, 'Were they married?' but, 'Are they man and wife?' And so with divorce, it is a cessation of the state of marriage.

Elders tell me that women ask for divorce far more than men do. 'Men have patience, and women have not,' that is what they say. For every little quarrel a woman will want a divorce. 'Thakin, if we were to grant divorces every time a woman came and demanded it, we should be doing nothing else all day long. If a husband comes home to find dinner not cooked, and speaks angrily, his wife will rush to us in tears for a divorce. If he speaks to another woman and smiles, if he does not give his wife a new dress, if he be fond of going out in the evening, all these are reasons for a breathless demand for a divorce. The wives get cross and run to us and cry, "My husband has been angry with me. Never will I live with him again. Give me a divorce." Or, "See my clothes, how old they are. I cannot buy any new dress. I will have a divorce." And we say, "Yes, yes; it is very sad. Of course, you must have a divorce; but we cannot give you one to-night. Go away, and come again in three days or in four days, when we have more time." And they go away, thakin, and they do not return. Next day it is all forgotten. You see, they don't know what they want; they turn with the wind—they have no patience.'

Sometimes they repent too late. Here is another of my memories about divorce:

There was a man and his wife, cultivators, living in a small village. The land that he cultivated

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

586 593 733 belonged to his wife, for she had inherited it from her father, together with a house and a little money. The man had nothing when he married her, but he was hardworking and honest and good-tempered, and they kept themselves going comfortably enough. But he had one fault: every now and then he would drink too much. This was in Lower Burma, where liquor shops are free to Burmans. In Upper Burma no liquor can be sold to them. He did not drink often. He was a teetotaler generally; but once a month, or once in two months, he would meet some friends, and they would drink in good fellowship, and he would return home drunk. His wife felt this very bitterly, and when he would come into the house, his eyes red and his face swollen, she would attack him with bitter words, as women do. She would upbraid him for his conduct, she would point at him the finger of scorn, she would tell him in biting words that he was drinking the produce of her fields, of her inheritance; she would even impute to him, in her passion, worse things than these, things that were not true. And the husband was usually good-natured, and admitted his wrong, and put up with all her abuse, and they lived happily till the next time.

After this had been going on for a few years, instead of getting accustomed to her husband, instead of seeing that if he had this fault he had many virtues, and that he was just as good a husband as she was a wife, or perhaps better, her anger against him increased every time, till now she would declare that she would abide it no longer, that he was past endurance, and she would have a divorce; and

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

several times she even ran to the elders to demand it. But the elders would put it by. 'Let it wait,' they said, 'for a few days, and then we will see'; and by that time all was soothed down again. But at last the end came. One night she passed all bounds in her anger, using words that could never be forgiven; and when she declared as usual that she must have a divorce, her husband said: 'Yes, we will divorce. Let there be an end of it.' And so next day they went to the elders both of them, and as both demanded the divorce, the elders could not delay very long. A few days' delay they made, but the man was firm, and at last it was done. They were divorced. I think the woman would have drawn back at the last moment, but she could not, for very shame, and the man never wavered. He was offended past forgiveness.

So the divorce was given, and the man left the house and went to live elsewhere.

In a few days—a very few days—the wife sent for him again. 'Would he return?' And he refused. Then she went to the headman and asked him to make it up, and the headman sent for the husband, who came.

The woman asked her husband to return.

'Come back,' she said, 'come back. I have been wrong. Let us forgive. It shall never happen again.'

The man shook his head.

'No,' he said; 'a divorce is a divorce. I do not care to marry and divorce once a week. You were always saying, "I will divorce you, I will divorce you." Now it is done. Let it remain.'

The woman was struck with grief.

302 on top of the head. Scented hair oil is used by both sexes on
177 special occasions.
369
291 The HTAMEIN is regarded as "unworthy" for a man to touch. A
562 severe insult is for a wife to request her husband to bring her
183 HTAMEIN or to wash it. Drying HTAMEINS in the front of the house is never allowed; and it is strictly forbidden for this garment to touch any pongyi utensils. Parents instruct their boys never to pass under the strings of a line of which HTAMEINS are drying as such is thought to take away the masculine powers, and render the tattooed charms ineffective. Men and women's clothes are washed and stored separately.

●[593] When a son neglects his mother after marriage she will complain with rage that he has not come out of the HTAMEIN and is under the HTAMEIN government of his wife.

291 Women usually wear solid black HTAMEINS during menstruation.
841 Boys, in jest, inform one of their companions that he may now become serious when the girl of his choice appears in a black dress for the first time.

Slippers of both sexes are regarded as "dirty" objects and are left outside of the houses. They are strictly prohibited in pagoda enclosures and land. When a girl is angry at a teasing boy (or quarreling with a woman) she will threaten to slap his face with her sandal. This is a double insult since the head is regarded as a particularly sacred part of the body. Barbers must ask permission and apologise for touching the heads of their customers.

291 Western clothing has a higher status than Burmese clothing in
177 certain situations and on certain occasions especially where western
554 people are present in suits. However, for most occasions, everyday or special, the Burmese costume is preferred. When abroad the Burmese men usually wear western garb. The wearer of western clothes

[186] is often open to the taunt that he is "Bo Gyi (term for Englishmen) made in Burma". There is a strong feeling in all cases to be "properly" dressed and not to stand out from the rest of the group. This tendency is stronger in men than women who with their jewels and fine silks attempt to rival each other in a contest for social posi-

[562] tion. Burmese girl students who go abroad almost invariably wear their native costumes.

415
252
[285]

basket PYIDAUNG. Both cost a rupee. One does not seem to be preferred to the other except as getting them allows a bargain to be made. The form is that of a pear shaped body with a square base, measuring about 8 by 8 inches. The basket is constructed in the wicker technique with small, whole reeds. Pathee: 2. Camp: 1.

251
415
[435]

CHIN DAING (storage basket): The form of this basket is a larger version of the measurers. It has, however, an open weave giving a checkered effect to the sides and bottom. It is used to store objects including food. At Pathee this basket was used in working the IRS. The fish were scooped up, and later washed in them. The two used in camp were brought from Pathee where they cost Rs. 1/4- Camp: 1, Pathee: 15 for washing fish.

243
415

Winnowing trays: Shallow baskets about 2½ feet in diameter and 2 inches high were used as shifting and storage trays. The SAGAW has a rounded base; while the SAGAR has a flat base with fiber walls. Both are made of flat, wide-meshed reeds. The trays used in camp came from Pathee where they cost Rs. 1/4 each. Pathee: 1.

415

KHE CHIN (Marketing basket): This basket is in the general shape of a cylinder, 1½ feet wide and 8 inches high, with open, flat reed sides and a semi-circular handle across the top. It is used to carry objects from market and to store them in the house. Pathee: 2, Camp: 1.

415
511
178

U Myaing expresses the contrast between the camp equipment and that of Pathee: "These objects in camp are barely sufficient. We have to live as we are. In our own district we had sufficient to nail in boxes. The extra ones were nailed in boxes and only enough were taken out for the seven people who eat. When visitors come, good ones are brought out. Plates for curry, plates for eating rice. There were various kinds."

Food Items

262

Ma Aye Myaing gave as complete a set of data on the food consumption of her family as she could. The following data is inclusive for the family of seven, both in Pantanaw and the refugee camp. Ma Aye Myaing decides what dishes to cook for each meal of the day, and she does this without any consultation with U Myaing. She does not ask him what he would like for each meal, although sometimes when he expresses a desire for a certain dish she sees to it that it is prepared. She has a free hand in deciding what to cook for each meal in the day. Definitions of the weights and measures used follows in a glossary. The data is organized under the headings of (1) Main dishes and raw foods, (2) supplementary dishes and TO-ZAYE (vegetables eaten with NGAPI), and (3) trifles.

[593] ●

[128]

601 aunts are called DAW LAY - LAY being the junior term, and GYI the senior. The oldest uncle on the father's side is further distinguished by the term BA GYI (Big father); the eldest aunt on the mother's side (older than mother) is GYI DAW. Father is called APAY or endearingly PAPAY. The mother is called AMAY (address) or MAMAY (reference) which are also the terms for eldest sister. The two terms may coincide in part out of regard for the important part which the elder sister plays in taking care of the younger children.

In ego's own generation seniority is stressed even more so that elder elder brother is AKO TYI, younger elder brother is AKO LAY, youngest elder brother is AKO NGEY, and younger brothers are NAUNG LAY. Younger sister is NYI MA. Age differentiation terms at ego's generation are in reference to ego's age position. At the parents generation they are in terms of the father and mother's age position. Age position is not considered laterally to cousins or in the descending generations.

Daughters are THAMEE and sons THA. Grand-children are MYEE and great grand children MYEE indiscriminately of sex. Male first cousins are NYI-AKO-THAMEE-KHE, and female first cousins are NYI-MA THAMEE-KHE. Their children are given the same terms as grand children (MYEE) and call ego BA-GYI (big father).

The dominant feature of the Burmese kinship system is the emphasis on relative age. This is a reflection of the importance of seniority seen throughout the social organization in which the seniors are accorded respect and diffidence by the juniors and in turn have to assume responsibility for the juniors.

● 593 U Myaing is the bread-winner of the family and because of this fact coupled with his relationship position he makes the major decisions for the family. He will, however, consult the three adult members of the family (including the eldest daughter) on important issues where discussion is necessary. His attitude toward his mother is one of great respect bordering on reverence. When I wanted to take their pictures together he dropped to his knees with hands in a prayer attitude before his mother - a typical parent-child attitude, he explained. He is responsible for feeding and clothing the family and providing the education of the children. The daughter

593●

must ask permission of the parents or Daw Aw Zar when they wish to go to town or anywhere else even when leaving for school. In a special sense the children are "owned" by the parents. Considerate children appreciate the efforts of their parents and take care of them when they become old. If he had a son he would have to make the financial arrangements to "put him through" the novitiation or SHIN PYU ceremony. The corresponding "initiation" ceremony of the girls, that of ear-boring has not been done for the daughters. For the KIN MIN TAT (name giving) or "christaining" of the eldest daughter, U Myaing bought 50 leaves of bread, as well as sugar and coconuts to feed the children of the village. The ceremony cost Rs. 90/- or 100/-. The ceremony for the second and third daughters was celebrated with a black rice preparation called KAUKSWEIN-BAUNG (treacle rice steamed). The ingredients consisted of 2 baskets of black rice (costing Rs. 10/-), 8 PYI of beans (costing Rs. 3/10), 2 condensed milk tins of sesamum oil (costing Rs. 1/-), 10 to 15 ticals of salt (costing 2 annas), and 4 coconuts. The family had to evacuate from Pathwe before the ceremony of the youngest daughter. U Myaing was made a novice at the age of nine, together with six other young boys. The donors who were bearing the costs of the ceremony decked them out in fine clothes and in the evening, after being taught the stanza asking for the robes, they were made KOYINS. Charities were given. U Myaing remained seven days as a KOYIN. His SHIN PYU or novitiation ceremony costs altogether between Rs. 3000/- and Rs. 4000/- (for the seven boys), because, besides other expenses MYA MEINS were distributed free to all the women guests and PU SOES to the men. U Myaing's grandfather bore the costs of making 14 boys KOYINS and one into an UPAZIN or monk. The whole village helped to cook the food for the reception. This help was entirely voluntary and the helpers did not wait till requests were made for their help.

881

426
593

In times of financial difficulty U Myaing may borrow money from relations (preferred) or close friends. U Myaing's eldest brother is the first person to apply to - however, he does not have much money so cannot help in this way. But he can be depended on in various other ways. For example, he will help in a fight, or give good advice on where U Myaing might go for a job or to borrow money. A mainstay financially is U Myaing's mother's elder sister (Daw Gyi), Ma Ohn Myint,

426
•593 or her daughters or sons who are financially well-to-do. U Myaing's sister who lives in Rangoon has given help to the eldest daughter by housing her near her cheroot-rolling job. The pattern of mutual aid among the relatives is strongly developed among the Burmese. "A tree will support a thousand birds" emphasises the importance of the relative who makes good for the rest of the family.

Relationship of Family to Community and State

607
621 A large portion of the Pathwe community were related to U Myaing. Consequently many reciprocal activities fell within the family group. Most of the activities were prescribed by virtue of being a member of the community rather than by kinship ties. Such activities include cooperation in house raisings, funerals, marriage festivals, SHIN PYU ceremonies where the family involved needs help. Unpleasant occasions such as funerals demand everyone's attendance if not financial participation.
602
621 On pleasant occasions the participants are apt to be one's friends and
476 relatives. When someone builds a small house or puts a new thatch
[342] roof on, the other villagers come to help. He does not have to pay the workers anything or even feed them. He has only to cook and prepare for them the raw foods and chillies, onions, etc., which each one brings for himself. This statement, however, holds true only when small houses are built. Regular carpenters have to be hired to build the big ones. U Myaing frequently helped to build other people's houses - small houses that could be completed in a day. Help of this nature is offered without asking.

764
621 When a person dies in the village, the villagers all go to the
476 house and certain elders help to bathe and dress the corpse and place it on the bed, where it may be kept anywhere from three to seven days before being taken out and buried. The ground for burial is bought at the ceremony for the price of one pice. Now, in keeping with the general inflation, the price has risen to one anna. The grave is dug by the young men's group. The young men of the village carry the bier, or pull the bullock cart on which the coffin rests, and dig the grave. They also provide the orchestra. For performances on the night of the death and the day after a Burmese orchestra is engaged at the rate of Rs. 50/- to Rs. 100/-. The various visitors who come to condole with

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

38. yauccá Husband (referential).
39. mù Husband's younger brother; husband's younger sister's husband. 601
40. khé?óu Elder sister's husband; husband's elder brother; husband's elder sister's husband.
41. yaummà Husband's sister; husband's brother's wife.

As may readily be seen by inspection of the charts, this kinship system reflects clearly the bilateral family structure, with an absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition of relative age at many points. For each generation a distinct set of terms is used. On ego's generation all cousins are merged with siblings; the terms are differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, it will be noted, parents' siblings are terminologically distinguished according to degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation, however, the factor of age loses significance; sex is the sole differentiating factor, apart from distinguishing terms for ego's own children. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a single generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Behaviorally as well as terminologically, relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of Burmese social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying things for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons. 561 602 [516]

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of the Buddhist "Lent"—a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October—the New Year, and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received. [79]

SOCIAL RELATIONS OF KIN

Husband–Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her 593 [592] [594]

[Text continues on page 442]

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination.

Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of property upon divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and an absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese conceptions: whatever ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter, it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of deference to males, are expected of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual behavior. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate from her husband, especially if they have children. 593 [837]

Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder. This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying of things, and even the arrangement of sleeping mats or beds—a younger sibling never should sleep with his feet extended toward an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent, the eldest sibling of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in the family. [768]

Father–Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried daughter passes the age of puberty, the father is expected to lead a circumspect and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunkenness on his part reflects upon the daughter and detracts from her marital chances. [581]

Mother–Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that in Burmese Buddhist thinking, being the mother of a son is itself considered the greatest event of a woman's life and represents the achievement of full existence as a female human being. The relationship is a close and indulgent one. The mother is regarded as more important by the son than his wife; in fact, a son will choose his wife with a great deal of regard for his mother's opinions and wishes. [581]

Mother–Daughter. The mother is the female child's early teacher. It is considered most important for the daughter to learn prayers, how to prepare the daily food offering for the household altar, and how to change the flowers on the altar. These things are taught almost from the time the child starts learning language. Other household duties in which the mother instructs her daughter vary considerably with the economic status of the family: in poor families some assistance with tending the animals and winnowing the rice crop is part of the girl's work from about the age of ten. Daughters are expected to show filial respect and deference equally to the mother and father. 593 868 462

Father–Son. The father occupies the role of disciplinarian in the family. Disciplining of sons may include physical punishment, though such measures to obtain conformity are not resorted to readily by the Burmese. Prior to adolescence, boys are taught prayers and good habits by their mothers, with the father remaining more or less in the background and interfering only when disciplinary action may be required of him. After a son passes adolescence the father becomes important as his mentor. 593 861

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

14. BURMAN MOTHER AND INFANT.

tempers Nature's discipline of knocks and bumps, as compared with the bare hard ground of the Indian hut. Nevertheless the young Burman's converse with his environment is unrestricted enough. By the time he is a year old he may be trusted to himself on a flimsy platform many feet off the ground or over the water. There are few things in the way of the child that it may not handle. The very cheroot its mother is smoking is a coveted plaything. The daily bath at the river-side or well has familiarised the child with another element. It may rush out into the first tropical shower and splash to its heart's content with its older playmates in the first tepid puddle. The Burman's regular exclamation of wonder or fear is "mother!"—*amè*.

When the child is a few months old, relatives and friends are assembled and entertained with tea and sweets to witness the ceremony of piercing the ears and giving a name. The Burmans have no patronymics. The name is chosen from a set of current euphemisms proper to the days of the week and their planets, according to the star presiding over the day of birth. The fancy of the parents and the prognostics of the soothsayer unite to decide the choice. Names are single or are compounded from two series (in Arakán from three). Common names, beginning with the "Sunday-son," are Ôn, Kyaw, San, Shwe, Po, Tha, Dun. Men's and women's names are taken from the same sets; only the courtesy-prefixes differ (p. 74). The needle-hole made in the lobe of the ear on the naming-day is expanded by means of plugs and rolls of bast. In the course of a few years the lobe takes a plug one-half to three-quarters

15. MUDLARKS.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

18. YOUNG CHILDREN'S TOYS.

Manufactured toys are the most noticeable wares in the sale-booths. A universal toy is the seed from the giant pod of the *dò* creeper (No. 251). Like marbles with us, the seeds—*gòn-hnyin*—are the prizes of the game. In Sangermano's time (1783–1806) these games used to be played by adults. A characteristic boys' game is *sìtòppyit* (No. 25). Lots are cast for riders and horses. A ball or bundle is thrown from rider to rider till a player misses the catch, when all the riders dismount and scramble with the horses for the ball. The one who secures it becomes or remains a rider as the case may be. Boys run races for their own sport and that of their elders, and race their toy boats. They fight duels with their kites, each flier seeking to saw through his opponent's kite-line, for which purpose a length of string has been roughened with sand or pounded glass. The peg-top is a favourite toy. That it is indigenous is proved by certain proverbial sayings. Burman boys are more like our own and take to European games more kindly than other Asiatics (*cf.* p. 69). The toy of the day is the tricycle, which parents will pinch themselves to provide for their children, and which the happy possessors of will make the common property of all their playmates. Where children awaken such genuine interest, punishment is rarely called for and is never

19. GAMES IN THE WATER.

524
[178]
[538]
[177
858]
[157]
861
858
593

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

593
858
861
[524]
868
857
858
412

20. TOY CART.

of a savage description. Children have pretty manners; they are respectful to their elders without shyness or cringing.

Children grow up among the implements they will use in after life. Wooden mills for husking rice, tilt-hammers and mortars for pounding, cotton-seeders with geared rollers, spinning-wheels, weaving-looms and other simple machines are in every household; besides agricultural implements, carts and boats, all of which are made or kept in repair by the inmates (*cf.* p. 120). The workshops of artizans of every class are open to view, and the processes are obvious to every passer-by. The interest aroused in children is more diversified than in cold countries with their more secluded life. From mimicking the occupations of adults children learn to take part and soon begin to like a real share in them. Their trade begins with make-believe wares, then come scraps of house and garden produce till it develops into a source of pocket-money and training in business (Nos. 281, 431). The years of tutelage merge into the age of responsibility without abrupt transition. The intelligence which the school-teacher proceeds to build on has insensibly developed under conditions more than commonly favourable, which may help to account for the precocity of Burman school-children under good teaching.

[153]

21. PEG-TOPS (DYIN-PAUK).

871
[524]
876
413

From the ages of eight to ten, boys begin attending the school of the Buddhist monastery (*kyaung*), where they are taught free by the recluse (*pôngyî*) or by his sojourner recluses (*upasin*). The spelling-book is chanted in a chorus led by a senior pupil, and is copied out with a white steatite pencil on a

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

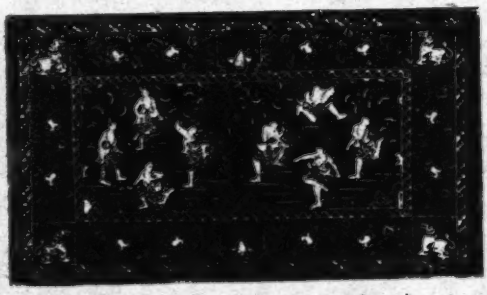
576
554
[857]
[593]

159. CHILDREN AT THE RIVER SIDE (p. 81).

Every stranger, man or woman, is addressed *K'mbyâ*—sir, madam. There is a courteous address for nearly every relation in life. Children, in speaking to their parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts, say *Shin* and *Daw*—lord, lady; wife to husband, *Shin*; husband to wife, *Byo*, *Bya*—terms of endearment; younger brother or sister to elder, *Go*, *Maung-dyî*; elder brother to younger *Maung*; brothers to sisters, *Ma*. *Maung* and *Ma* (brother and sister) have become the ordinary prefixes to names, answering to our Mr., Mrs., Miss. These are used even by parents to their grown-up children. To inferiors and in disparagement, the plain *nga*, *mè*, *mi* are used. Middle-aged men are given the address *Go*, and old men that of *Û* (uncle), which is also the prefix to the *bwè* of the *yahán*. Great regard is conveyed by the address *Sayâ*—teacher, master. The honorific word for wife is *gadáw*, thus—*sayâ-gadáw*, *min-gadáw*. To royalty the addresses were *Gôdaw*—[illegible] self; *Ashin-Payâ*—lord of lords; *Pôn-daw-dyî*—of great glory. These titles came to be used for ministers and governors, as more euphemistic ones were devised for the kings. The same addresses are accorded by courtesy to the *yahán*, who on their part address the layman as *Tagâ*, *Tagâdaw*—supporter, great founder. The layman refers to himself as *tabyî-daw*—the honoured disciple. In other relations of life, other periphrases are used for the pronouns of the first and second persons. The plain *I* and *you* — *ugâ*, *nin* — are only used in disparagement. Thus the current phrase for *I* is *tyumôk*—the humble servant. (For women, *tyunma*.) In addressing superiors, the phrase is *tyumdáw*, *Payâ-tyumdáw*

[792]

[531
524]



160. CHINLON GAME—APPLIQUÉ WORK (p. 179).

30: Maung Htin Aung E-4 (no date) 1953 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

671 her own choice. The head of the Burmese family can also give
593 away children under the age of puberty or majority to another
597 family for adoption, but when the child attains the age of puberty or majority, he or she has the option to choose in which family (i.e. his original family or his adoptive family) he
671 will remain. Acquisitions by members of the family accrue
593 to the family, but as in Roman and Hindu laws, certain classes
428 of acquisition by members of the family accrue to the acquirer and not to the family. Gifts from grandparents, from the king, and in certain cases, from strangers, and earnings through exercise of skill in the arts and in astrology, medicine, advocacy, and alchemy accrue to the acquirer. When a member of the family wishes to leave the family, there is no necessity to gain the assistance of a court of law. By mutual consent among the members, he is permitted to leave and he is given his share of the family estate. When the whole family decides to break up also, no formality is required, and by general consent, the family estate is divided between the members according to the rules of law pertaining to the partition of an estate into various shares.

671 One of the main features of Burmese society is the high
562 status of its women. Unlike the situation in Hindu or Chinese society, the Burmese woman has never been a mere chattel at the disposal of the Burmese man. Since prehistoric times Burmese women have enjoyed an equality of status, rank, and opportunity with men. Under the Burmese kings, the women held high office, and served often as headman, chief-
[773] tainess, and queen. In Burmese folktales dealing with strange disputes and wonderful decisions, which are known as Juristic Tales, the judge is a woman, namely Princess Learned-in-the-Law. At the present day, all the learned professions are open to women, and approximately 25 per cent of the students at the University of Rangoon are women.

671 The high status of women in Burmese society is reflected
583 in the Burmese customary law relating to marriage, divorce,
586 and inheritance. In Burmese law, marriage is purely a civil
428